



Richard Thomas James

Richard Thomas James was born in Portland, Indiana, February 27, 1910, the son of Elmer Eldridge James and Sarah Sophia VanCleve Baker James. His grandfather, David VanCleve Baker was a member of the Indiana Legislature. His great-great grandfather Nathan Byrd Hawkins, son of John Jones (J) Hawkins, the second pioneer settler in Jay County, represented Jay and Adams counties in the Indiana Legislature in 1842 and was a member of the Second Indiana Constitutional Convention in 1850. Another great-great grandfather, David Clark Baker was a Jay County Clerk and judge.

In Portland High School, Dick was active in sports and public speaking, winning the state oratorical contest.

He was president of both junior and senior classes. He attended law school at Western Reserve University in Cleveland and later practiced law in Portland. He was a member of the Jay County Bar Association. Dick also won the state doubles championship in tennis.

Dick's career in Republican politics began in 1934 when he was elected to the Indiana House of Representatives. He served in the House in the 1935 session and at the special session of 1936. In 1938-40 he was Deputy Secretary of State. When elected State Auditor in 1940, he was the youngest elected state officer in history. He was re-elected in 1942. He was Lieutenant-Governor of Indiana from 1944 to 1948, during the Governorship of Ralph Gates. In 1948 he dropped out of the gubernatorial race to

become Vice-President and Treasurer of Butler University until 1952. At that time he became Executive Secretary of the Hoosier Motor Club until his death in 1965.

In 1952, he was the first campaign chairman for the Indiana Mental Health Association which began a growth progress which has been outstanding in the nation. He was also president of the association.

Dick was chairman of The Indianapolis Community Chest Campaign in 1957, the Easter Seal Drive, Advisory Committee to the State Department of Commerce and Indiana Highway Users Conference.

Other organizations he served were the Indiana Legislative Committee on Traffic Safety, Indianapolis Symphony Board, Indianapolis Travelers Aid Society, Riley Memorial Association and a trustee of both Butler University and Arthur Jordan Foundation. He was a director of Union Federal Savings and Loan Association.

He was a member of the Presbyterian Church, Columbia Club, Indianapolis Athletic Club, Indianapolis Press Club, Beta Theta Pi. Fraternity, Scottish Rite, Rotary Club and a Past Exalted Ruler of the Elks Club.

Richard James and Alice Rebecca Beard were married July 22, 1934. Alice was the daughter of Leora Paul and Cecelia Johanna Fitzmaurice Beard.

Direct descendants of Richard T. James are: Richard Beard James and wife Sandy Reagan James; Rebecca James Baldes of Portland, IN; sons Peter John Baldes and Jodie Gerdin Baldes; Richard James Baldes and Elizabeth Dix Baldes and daughter Anna Elizabeth Baldes of Albany, NY.

Richard Thomas James died in Indianapolis on October 27, 1965, and is buried at Greenpark Cemetery in Portland, Indiana. Alice died in Richmond, Indiana on August 5, 2003.

At the time of his death, the Indianapolis Star editorialized ...

His untimely death at age 55 is a loss to the state and its residents whom he has served so well. A tireless campaigner for community and civic projects, for the development of Butler University as well as for expansion of state commerce and industry, Dick James in departing leaves a void hard to fill.

Alice James later married Dwight Young of Portland, Indiana. Genealogists and historians may be interested to know that Alice's first husband, Richard James and Dwight's first wife, Mary Easterday were second cousins. Therefore, their children are both third cousins and brothers and sisters. Alice and Dick never knew that they were also eighth cousins once removed through Clayton sisters who married into each line back in 16th century England.

Submitted by: [Rebecca James](#) Portland, Indiana